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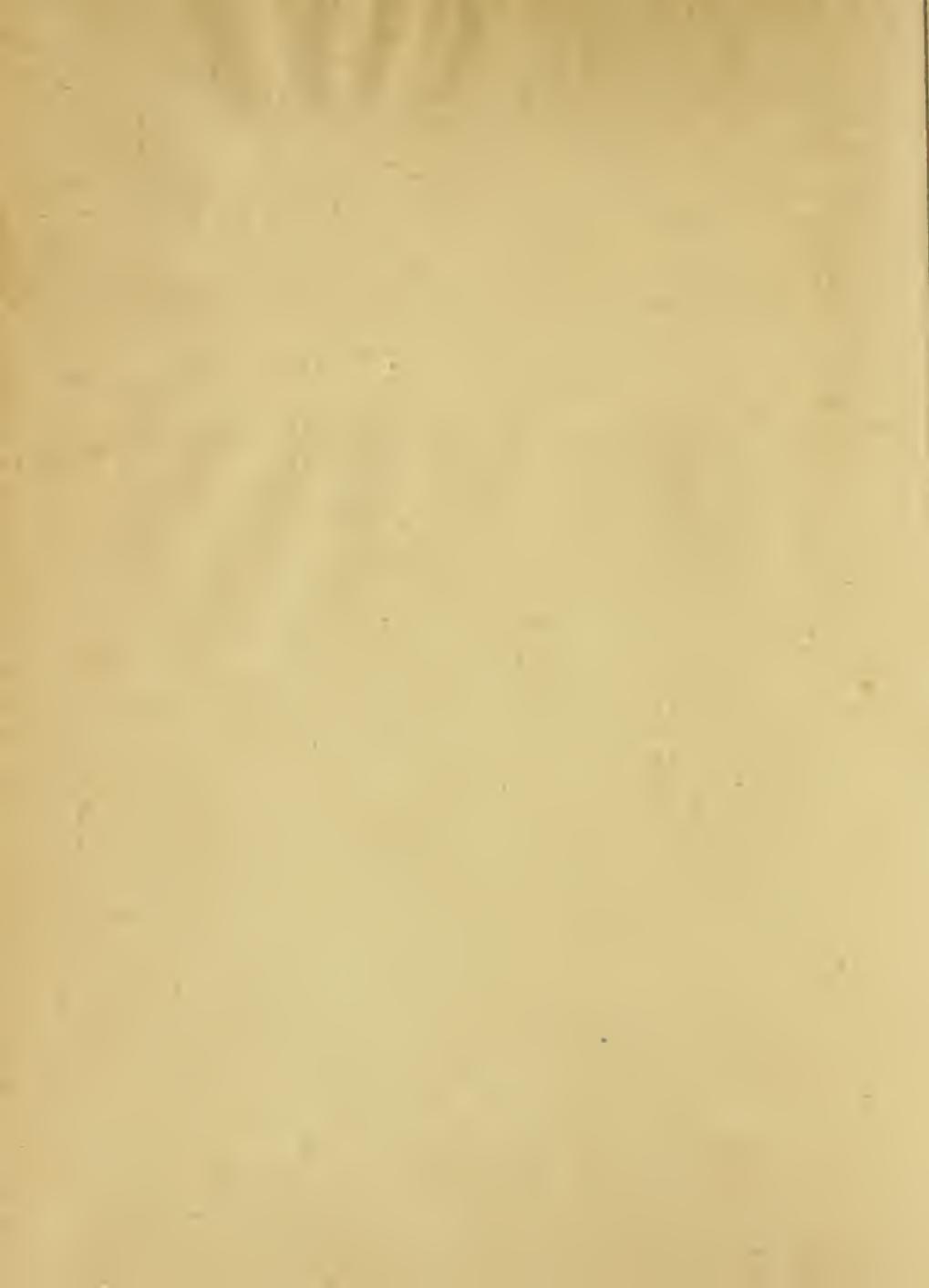
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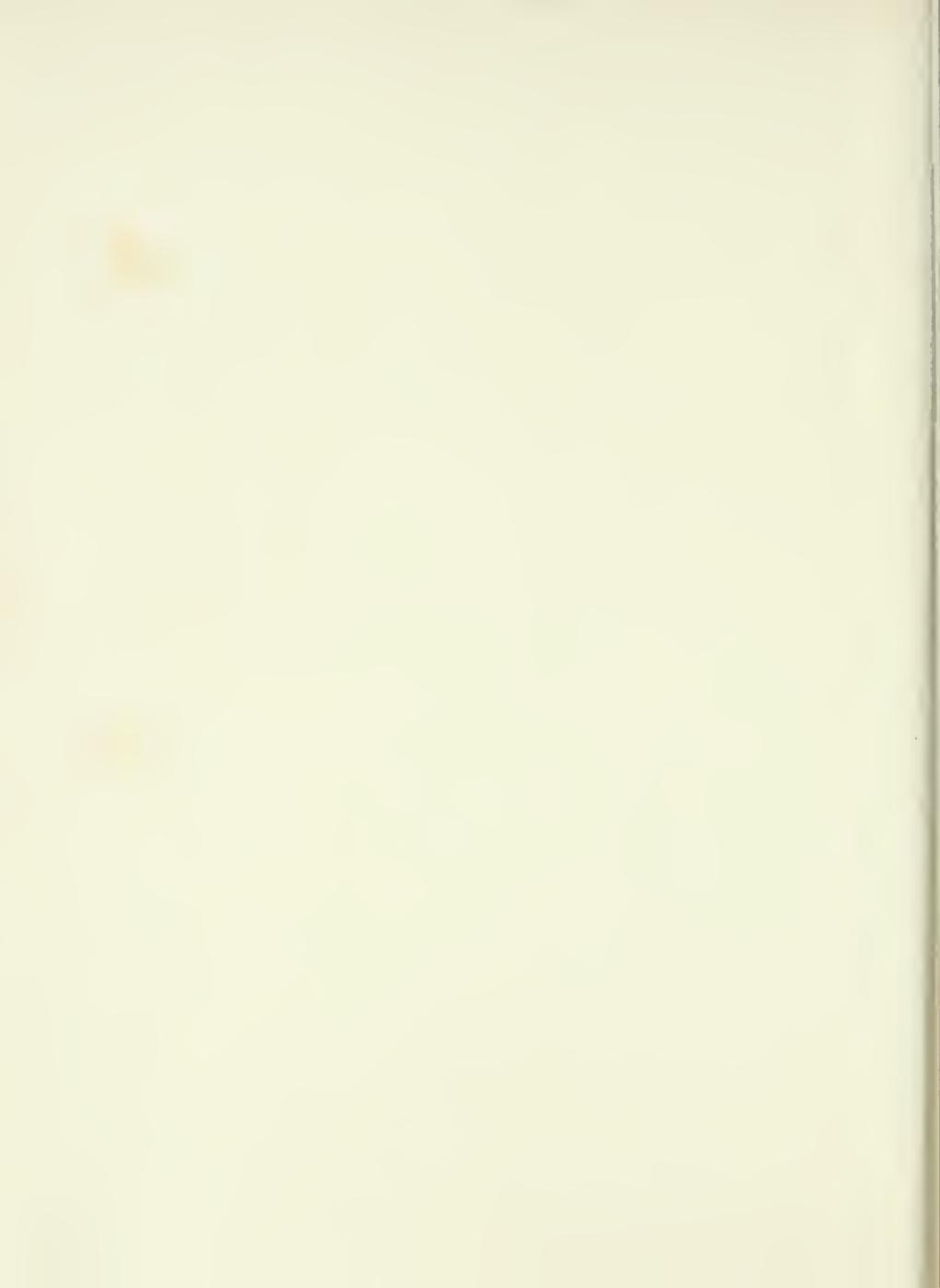
SPRING
IN TUSCANY















SPRING IN TUSCANY
AND OTHER LYRICS

THE Triton in the Ilex-wood
Is lonely at Castello.

*The snow is on him like a hood,
The fountain-reeds are yellow.*

*But never Triton sorrowed yet
For weather chill or mellow :
He mourns, my Dear, that you forget
The gardens of Castello !*

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

SPRING IN TUSCANY AND OTHER
LYRICS PRINTED FOR AND PUBLISHED BY THOMAS B MOSHER PORTLAND
MAINE MDCCCCXII





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FOREWORD

THE white magic of style is seldom displayed to greater advantage than when it has to do with Italy. If this be true of prose such as Pater's Renaissance and Maurice Hewlett's Earthwork out of Tuscany it is doubly true of the poetry that has gathered around all things Italian and, like "music slumbering in the shell," become audible. Four lyrics chosen for an earlier volume in this series are here augmented and carried out with variations upon the same underlying theme: music that closes in "commiserating sevenths"—beauty that at last must lose its lustrous gaze and die.

Our choice ranges from the unknown writer who signs his poem "Aureolus Paracelsus," an undoubted disciple of Browning as the name alone would imply, to an almost equally unknown poet from whose unique little volume Galeazzo: A Venetian Episode (1886) two poems are given.

One lyric has the added pathos of a young life that never grew old. Cora Fabbri died in 1892 at the age of twenty years, and did not live to see the Lyrics she had written as they were issued in their beautiful first edition. It is with the permission of her publishers, the Messrs. Harper, that we are now enabled to reprint In Florence.

The names of Algernon Charles Swinburne, John Addington Symonds, A. Mary F. Robinson and Laurence Binyon require no introduction or commendation from us. As for the passage from Guarini which closes our selections it will probably never find a translator who may hope to equal Leigh Hunt in recapturing “one of the most beautiful sighs” that ever greeted the return of spring.

T. B. M.

SPRING IN TUSCANY
AND OTHER LYRICS



PROEM

O DEATH of things that are, Eternity
 Of things that seem;
Of all the happy past remains to me,
 To-day, a dream!

Long blessed days of love and wakening thought,
 All, all are dead;
Nothing endures we did, nothing we wrought,
 Nothing we said.

But once I dreamed I sat and sang with you
 On Ida hill.
There, in the echoes of my life, we two
 Are singing still.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.



SPRING IN TUSCANY

R OSE-RED lilies that bloom on the banner ;
Rose-cheeked gardens that revel in spring ;
Rose-mouthed acacias that laugh as they
climb,
Like plumes for a queen's hand fashioned to fan
her

With wind more soft than a wild dove's wing,
What do they sing in the spring of their
time ?

If this be the rose that the world hears singing,
Soft in the soft night, loud in the day,
Songs for the fire-flies to dance as they
hear ;

If that be the song of the nightingale, springing
Forth in the form of a rose in May,
What do they say of the way of the year ?

What of the way of the world gone Maying,
What of the work of the buds in the bowers,
What of the will of the wind on the wall,
Fluttering the wall-flowers, sighing and playing,
Shrinking again as a bird that cowers,
Thinking of hours when the flowers have
to fall ?

Out of the throats of the loud birds showering,
Out of the folds where the flag-lilies leap,
Out of the mouths of the roses stirred,
Out of the herbs on the walls reflowering,
Out of the heights where the sheer snows sleep,
Out of the deep and the steep, one word.

One from the lips of the lily-flames leaping,
The glad red lilies that burn in our sight,
The great live lilies for standard and
crown ;

One from the steeps where the pines stand sleeping,

One from the deep land, one from the height,
One from the light and the might of the town.

The lowlands laugh with delight of the highlands,
Whence May winds feed them with balm and breath

From hills that beheld in the years behind
A shape as of one from the blest souls' islands,
Made fair by a soul too fair for death,
With eyes on the light that should smite
them blind.

Vallombrosa remotely remembers,
Perchance, what still to us seems so near
That time not darkens it, change not mars,

The foot that she knew when her leaves were
September's,
The face lift up to the star-blind seer,
That saw from his prison arisen his stars.

And Pisa broods on her dead, not mourning,
For love of her loveliness given them in fee ;
And Prato gleams with the glad monk's
gift

Whose hand was there as the hand of morning ;
And Siena, set in the sand's red sea,
Lifts loftier her head than the red sand's
drift.

And far to the fair south-westward lightens,
Girdled and sandalled and plumed with flowers
At sunset over the love-lit lands,
The hill-side's crown where the wild hill brightens,
Saint Fina's town of the Beautiful Towers,
Hailing the sun with a hundred hands.

Land of us all that have loved thee dearest,
Mother of men that were lords of man,
Whose name in the world's heart works as
a spell,
My last song's light, and the star of mine earliest,
As we turn from thee, sweet, who wast ours for
a span,
Fare well we may not who say farewell.

ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

WITH A POETRY BOOK

THIS may beguile a moment in some day
 Of brief division from a city's roar,
When in the rush, the turbulence, the din
There comes a pause. Then one may think of
 fields,
Of flowers, of birds, of all sweet natural things
That never lose their spell upon the soul.
In such an hour of the dim afternoon,
When yellow fog has curtained up the pane,
Draw to the lamp and read of tragedies
How kings and sons of kings have met their
 deaths ;
And if you tire of all the writer's art,
Think, then, of Venice in her sapphire sea,
Of me afloat upon the calm lagoon
Brought face to face with a great golden shield
That glorifies the water and the sky ;

While from tall towers wreathed in opal mist,
Sweet bells spread melody along the waves,
Warning me that all lovely hours must die ;
And that we, too, are hurrying to our end.

PERCY E. PINKERTON.

U M B R I A

DEEP Italian day with a wide-washed splen-
dour fills

Umbria green with valleys, blue with a hundred
hills.

Dim in the south Soracte, a far rock faint as a
cloud

Rumours Rome, that of old spoke over earth,
“Thou art mine !”

Mountain shouldering mountain circles us forest-
browed

Heaped upon each horizon in fair uneven line ;
And white as on builded altars tipped with a
vestal flame

City on city afar from the thrones of the moun-
tains shine,

Kindling, for us that name them, many a memo-
ried fame,

Out of the murmuring ages, flushing the heart
like wine.

Pilgrim-desired Assisi is there ; Spoleto proud
With Rome's imperial arches, with hanging woods
divine :

Monte Falco hovers above the hazy vale
Of sweet Clitumnus loitering under poplars pale ;
O'er Foligno, Trevi clings upon Apennine.

And over this Umbrian earth — from where with
bright snow spread

Towers abrupt Leonessa, huge, like a dragon's
chine,

To western Ammiata's mist-apparelled head,
Ammiata that sailors watch on wide Tyrrhenian
waves,—

Lie in the jealous gloom of cold and secret shrine
Or Gorgon-sculptured chamber hewn in old rock
caves,

Hiding their dreams from the light, the austere
Etruscan dead.

O lone forests of oak and little cyclamens red
Flowering under shadowy silent boughs benign !
Streams that wander beneath us over a pebbly
bed !

Hedges of dewy hawthorn and wild woodbine !
Now as the eastern ranges flush and the high air
chills

Blurring meadowy vale, blackening heaths of pine,
Now as in distant Todi, loftily-towered — a sign
To wearying travellers — lights o'er hollow Tiber
gleam,

Now our voices are stilled and our eyes are given
to a dream,

As night, upbringing o'er us the ancient stars anew,
Stars that triumphing Cæsar and tender Francis
knew,

With fancied voices mild, august, immortal, fills
Umbria dim with valleys, dark with a hundred
hills.

LAURENCE BINYON.

IN FLORENCE

O TUSCAN days, my true, gold-hearted days,
With thy deep skies and fleecy clouds afloat,
Like the dropped petals of some moon-pale flower;

With thy still sunset, zephyr-stirrèd hour,
Thy evening bird with thrilled melodious throat . . .
Gone, gone from me, my golden Tuscan day.

Once wert thou with me in fair Florence, crown
Of all that perfect, flower-filled Italy.
Thy name, O Florence, like a song doth fill

With memories the gray unblossoming still
That girts me round and holds me fast from thee—
From thee, O peaceful, perfect Tuscan town.

Thy lang'rous hush at even-tide just stirred
By some faint convent chime from very far,
Thy murmurous Arno speeding on its way,

And in the East a shadow wan and gray,
Kindled to brightness by a single star,
And somewhere in the West a singing bird.

All mem'ries. And the window whence my eyes
Saw Ponte Vecchio with its old-time mien,
Like some rich gem set deep in thy gold heart;

And faint Fiesole, where pale clouds start,
Dusted with leafy olive-trees, gray-green,
That fade off in the shadow-girted skies.

O Florence, my fair Florence, I would stray
Once more to-day, as in that dear dead time,
Along the streets at golden mid-noon's hour,

Till thy old Duomo and thy slender tower
Rose up before me with its mid-noon chime,
And haply step therein. All twilight gray,

With a faint trail of incense on the air,
And the low murmured hidden monotone
Of priests at holy mass. So, entered in,

How still it seemed after the city's din,
How solemn sweet the organ's vibrant tone.
I did not pray. The silence was a prayer.

Then out again into the rain of gold
Flooding the broad gay piazza everywhere . . .
A flutter of white wings, a flock of birds

Let loose, like some sweet tumult of love words,
Floating and sweeping through the sun-cleft air,
To peck the golden grain some hands would hold.

In those Spring days (Spring comes with tend'rer
look,
And far more lavish hands to that sweet place,
My little Tuscan town, than to this clime,

Cold England and its fogs) I used to climb
Thy Colli, Florence — climbing, reach the place
Where thy sweet face lies stretched out like a book;

Lies stretched out like a soft smile, caught and
kept

From the Past's fast-sealed lips, or like a flower
Yielding its petals up to the blue sky.

And when I strayed back to the city, I
Found all things flooded with the sunset hour
Save Ponte Vecchio, where the shadows crept.

Elsewise at night — the amorous Tuscan night,
When the white moon had climbed the silver stair
The fair stars make for their most lowly Queen —

How sweet from out the casement far to lean,
And feel the fragrance of the dewy air,
And see the whole world bathed in silver light!

Warm Tuscan sun! in that last dreaming lull
'Twixt night and day, along the Western ways
Thy tender light hath set from me fore'er:

Set, with my first lost love, lost dream, lost
prayer . . .

O Tuscan days! my true, gold-hearted days,
Thy lips are dumb, and mine are sorrowful.

Thy earth beneath my feet is cold and brown,
The skies are netted in a blank, gray shroud,
The mournful rain is dripping from the eaves. . . .

Lost — like a flower too deep-sunk in the leaves;
Lost — like a white star hidden by a cloud,
I see thee now, O little Tuscan town!

CORA FABBRI.

FLORENTINE MAY

S^{TILL}, still is the Night; still as the pause
after pain;

Still and as dear;

Deep, solemn, immense; veiling the stars in the
clear

Thrilling and luminous blue of the moon-shot
atmosphere;

Ah, could the Night remain!

Who, truly, shall say thou art sullen or dark or
unseen,

Thou, O heavenly Night,

Clear o'er the valley of olives asleep in the quiv-
ering light,

Clear o'er the pale-red hedge of the rose, and the
lilies all white

Down at my feet in the green?

Nay, not as the Day, thou art light, O Night, with
a beam

Far more dear and divine ;
Never the noon was blue as these tremulous
heavens of thine,
Pulsing with stars half seen, and vague in a pal-
lid shine,
Vague as a dream.

Night, clear with the moon, filled with the dreamy
fire

Shining in thicket and close,
Fire from the lamp in his breast that the luminous
fire-fly throws ;
Night, full of wandering light and of song, and
the blossoming rose,
Night, be thou my desire !

Night, Angel of Night, hold me and cover me so —
Open thy wings !

Ah, bend above and embrace! — till I hear in the
one bird that sings
The throb of thy musical heart in the dusk, and
the magical things
Only the Night can know.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

RICORDI

O F a tower, of a tower, white
 In the warm Italian night,
Of a tower that shines and springs
I dream, and of our delight.

Of doves, of a hundred wings
Sweeping in sound that sings
Past our faces, and wide
Returning in tremulous rings:

Of a window on Arno side,
Sun-warm when the rain has dried
On the roofs, and from far below
The clear street-cries are cried:

Of a certain court we know,
And love's and sorrow's thro

In marbles of mighty limb,
And the beat of our hearts aglow :

Of water whispering dim
To a porphyry basin's rim ;
Of flowers on a windy wall
Richly tossing, I dream.

And of white towns nestling small
Upon Apennine, with a tall
Tower in the sunset air
Sounding soft vesper-call :

And of golden morning bare
On Lucca roofs, and fair
Blue hills, and scent that shook
From blossoming chestnuts, where

Red ramparts overlook
Hot meadow and leafy nook,

Where girls with laughing cries
Beat clothes in a glittering brook :

And of magic-builded skies
Upon still lagoons ; and wise
Padua's pillared street
In the charm of a day that dies :

Of olive-shade in the heat,
And a lone, cool, rocky seat
On an island beach, and bright
Fresh ripples about our feet :

Of mountains in vast moon-light,
Of rivers' rushing flight,
Of gardens of green retreat
I dream, and of our delight.

LAURENCE BINYON.

IN AN ARBOUR, ASOLO

MY perfumed jasmine-tent commands
An outlook vast along the lands.
Northward, green hills confront my gaze,
Shrouded in filmy morning haze.
Their smooth sides take a deeper dye
As the red sun deserts the sky,
When clouds, like poppy-petals, fall
And fade around a purple wall
Whose top one fain would tread and see
All that across the barrier be.
Here, where the white road bends below,
Are ranged the roofs of Asolo,
An old, uneven, faded file
Of broken beams and rusty tile.
The stones which strew that quiet street
Were trampled once by Roman feet,
When through the city's gateway arched

Cæsar's intrepid legions marched,
And every house had harbour for
The cohorts of a conqueror.

They, in these peaceful hills, maybe,
Forgot their lust for victory,
Forgot red war in hours of ease
Above the waving apple-trees ;
And, in the silence of the plain,
Heard Nature's eloquence again.
In later days those walls have been
Safe shelter for a Cypriote queen,
Catherine Cornaro, homeless wife,
Here fled when clouds were round her life
And, shut in painted palace, she
Shook off the chains of royalty.
Ah ! she was wise ; here one enjoys
Peace after clamour, after noise
Of cities and the ceaseless strain
To win what one will lose again.
Am I not rich who hear the bees

Kissing those pale anemones
That make the grass about my feet
A coloured pavement rich and sweet ;
Who see the birch-leaves on their stem
Shake as the wind goes over them ;
Is not this opulence for me
Here to forget futurity,
And leave all feverish questioning
If life be just a trivial thing,
That they use best who multiply
Their pleasures in it ere they die,
Ignoring an eternity ?
Is not this wealth, to bask supine
Beneath a roof of jessamine ?

Yes, it is enviable ; and yet,
No mood uncoloured by regret
Visits my vexèd heart that now
As ever questions : where art thou ?
For I am chafed with memories

Of life below the moonlit skies
With thee in Venice, while our bark
Aimlessly loitered in the dark,
And tremulous, pathetic notes
Reached us from yellow-lanterned boats,
As violins and voices there
Showered sweet sounds upon the air ;
Sunk in a reverie sublime,
Oblivious of the world, of Time,
No better fate we wished than here
Across moon-silvered waves to steer
Serenely to some shining beach
Where never Nemesis may reach ;
Where as an echo heard should be
The hubbub of humanity ;
Where we should win deliverance
From all the tyranny of Chance ;
And memory should keep no mark
Upon her scrolls of sad and dark ;
So, ours were e'en a fairer home

Than Venice in the Adrian foam !
Ah ! by recalling selfish dreams
The present only wearier seems.
I want Thee ; yet away, afar,
Beyond the blue horizon bar
Are opening now those orient eyes,
Where first my soul saw Paradise.

PERCY E. PINKERTON.

RELICS

THIS flower that smells of honey and the sea,
White laurustine, seems in my hand to be
A white star made of memory long ago
Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to me.

A star out of the skies love used to know
Here held in hand, a stray left yet to show
What flowers my heart was full of in the days
That are long since gone down dead memory's
flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful ways,
Half hearkening what the buried season says
Out of the world of the unapparent dead
Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white brethren bred
Nigh where the last of all the land made head

Against the sea, a keen-faced promontory,
Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea-dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free place's glory ;
The wind that sang them all his stormy story
Had talked all winter to the sleepless spray,
And as the sea's their hues were hard and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the bright day,
They laughed out at the years that could not slay,
Live sons and joyous of unquiet hours,
And stronger than all storms that range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flowers
A keen-edged odour of the sun and showers
Was as the smell of the fresh honeycomb
Made sweet for mouths of none but paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves that clomb
They showed like windfalls of the snow-soft foam,

Or feathers from the weary south-wind's wing,
Fair as the spray that it came shoreward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast thou to bring ?
If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou sing ?

For some sign surely thou too hast to bear,
Some word far south was taught thee of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these that were
Taught of the wind's mouth and the winter air,

Poor tender thing of soft Italian bloom,
Where once thou grewest, what else for me grew
there ?

Born in what spring and on what city's tomb,
By whose hand wast thou reached, and plucked
for whom ?

There hangs about thee, could the soul's sense
tell,
An odour as of love and of love's doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast sweet to smell,
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to flower and fell,
 Of loves that lived a lily's life and died,
Of dreams now dwelling where dead roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-side
That for the sun's love makes its bosom wide
 At sunrise, and with all its woods and flowers
Takes in the morning to its heart of pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of ours,
And of the fair town called of the fair towers,
 A word for me of my San Gimignan,
A word of April's greenest-girdled hours.

Of the breached walls whereon the wallflowers ran
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of man,
 Though time with soft feet break them stone by
stone,
Who breaks down hour by hour his own reign's
span.

Off the cliff overcome and overgrown
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh clothes
bone,

That garment of acacias made for May,
Whereof here lies one witness overblown.

The fair brave trees with all their flowers at play,
How king-like they stood up into the day !

How sweet the day was with them, and the
night !

Such words of message have dead flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made bright,
And this that lived upon Italian light,

Before I throw them and these words away,
Who knows but I what memories too take flight ?

ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

IN A GONDOLA

(SUGGESTED BY MENDELSSOHN'S ANDANTE IN G
MINOR, BOOK I, LIED 6, OF THE "LIEDER OHNE
WORTE")

I.

IN Venice! This night so delicious—its air
Full of moonlight and passionate snatches
of song,
And quick cries, and perfume of romances,
which throng
To my brain, as I steal down this marble sea-stair,
And my gondola comes.
And I hear the slow, rhythmical sweep of the oar
Drawing near and more near—and the noise
of the prow—
And the sharp, sudden splash of her stoppage
—and now

I step in; we are off o'er the street's heaving
floor,

As my gondola glides

Away, past these palaces silent and dark,

Looming ghostly and grim o'er their bases,
where clings

Rank seaweed that gleams flecked with light
as it swings

To the plash of the waves, where they reach the
tide-mark

On the porphyry blocks — with a song full of dole,

A forlorn barcarole,

As my gondola glides.

II.

And the wind seems to sigh through that lattice
rust-gnawn

A low dirge for the past: the sweet past when
it played

In the pearl-braided hair of some beauty, who
stayed

But one shrinking half-minute — her mantle close-
drawn

O'er the swell of her bosom and cheeks passion-
pale,

Ere her lover came by, and they kissed. "They
are clay,

Those fire-hearted men with the regal pulse-
play ;

They are dust ! " sighs the wind with its whisper
of wail :

" Those women snow-pure, flower-sweet, pas-
sion-pale ! "

And the waves make reply with their song full
of dole,

 Their forlorn barcarole,
 As my gondola glides.

III.

Dust—those lovers! But Love ever lives, ever new,

Still the same: so we shoot into bustle and light,
And lamps from the festal casinos stream bright
On the ripples—and here 's the Rialto in view;
And black gondolas, spirit-like, cross or slide past,
And the gondoliers cry to each other: a song
Far away, from sweet voices in tune, dies along
The waters moon-silvered. So on to the vast
Shadowy span of an arch where the oar-echoes
leap

Through chill gloom from the marble; then
moonlight once more,
And laughter and strum of guitars from the
shore,
And sonorous bass-music of bells booming deep
From St. Mark's. Still those waves with their
song full of dole,

Their forlorn barcarole,
As my gondola glides.

IV.

Here the night is voluptuous with odorous sighs
From verandas o'erstarred with dim jessamine
flowers,
Their still scent deep-stirred by the tremulous
showers
Of a nightingale's notes as his song swells and
dies—

While my gondola glides.

V.

Dust—those lovers!—who floated and dreamed
long ago,
Gazed and languished and loved, on these
waters,—where I
Float and dream and gaze up in the still
summer sky

Whence the great stars look down—as they did
long ago;

Where the moon seems to dream with my dream-
ing—disc-hid

In a gossamer veil of white cirrus—then breaks
The dream-spell with a pensive half-smile, as
she wakes

To new splendor. But lo! while I mused we
have slid

From the open—the stir—down a lonely lane-
way

Into hush and dark shadow: fresh smells of
the sea

Come cool from beyond; a faint lamp mistily
Hints fair shafts and quaint arches, in crumbling
decay;

And the waves still break in with their song
full of dole,

Their forlorn barcarole,
As my gondola glides.

VI.

Then the silent lagune stretched away through
the night,

And the stars,—and the fairy-like city behind,
Domes and spires rising spectral and dim: till
the mind

Becomes tranced in a vague, subtle maze of
delight;

And I float in a dream, lose the present—or
seem

To have lived it before. Then a sense of deep
bliss,

Just to breathe—to exist—in a night such as
this:

Just to feel what I feel, drowns all else. But the
gleam

Of the lights, as we turn to the city once more,
And the music, and clangor of bells booming
slow,

And this consummate vision, St. Mark's!—
the star-glow
For a background — crowns all. Then I step
out on shore:
The Piazzetta ! my life-dream accomplished at
last,

(As my gondola goes.)

I am *here*: here alone with the ghost of the Past !
But the waves still break in with their song full
of dole,

Their forlorn barcarole,

As my gondola goes ;

And the pulse of the oar swept through silvery
spray

Dies away in the gloom, dies away, dies away—
Dies away — dies away — !

AUREOLUS PARACELSUS.

LA RETRAITE

WRITTEN ON THE LAST PAGE OF A GIFT BOOK

OLD books, old flowers, old feelings, foliage
pressed

By Time, who lays the stony weight of years
Upon our palpitating hopes and fears,
The scented herbage of our throbbing breast!

These leaves I turn, on a vague scholar's quest,
In search of some frail thought that disappears;

But meet, instead, the broad soul-haunted
meres

Of memory, and the friend's face I love best.
Dearest, this book I gave you years ago:
I find it now in Florence; and I write,
Here by your hearth, words you may never
know.

Live well; live happy. Short is day, but bright.
The Bersaglieri on the flags below
Cry: Comes for us, for you, for all the night!

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

O PRIMAVERA, GIOVENTÙ DE L'ANNO

O SPRING, *thou youthful beauty of the year,
Mother of flowers, bringer of warbling
quires,*

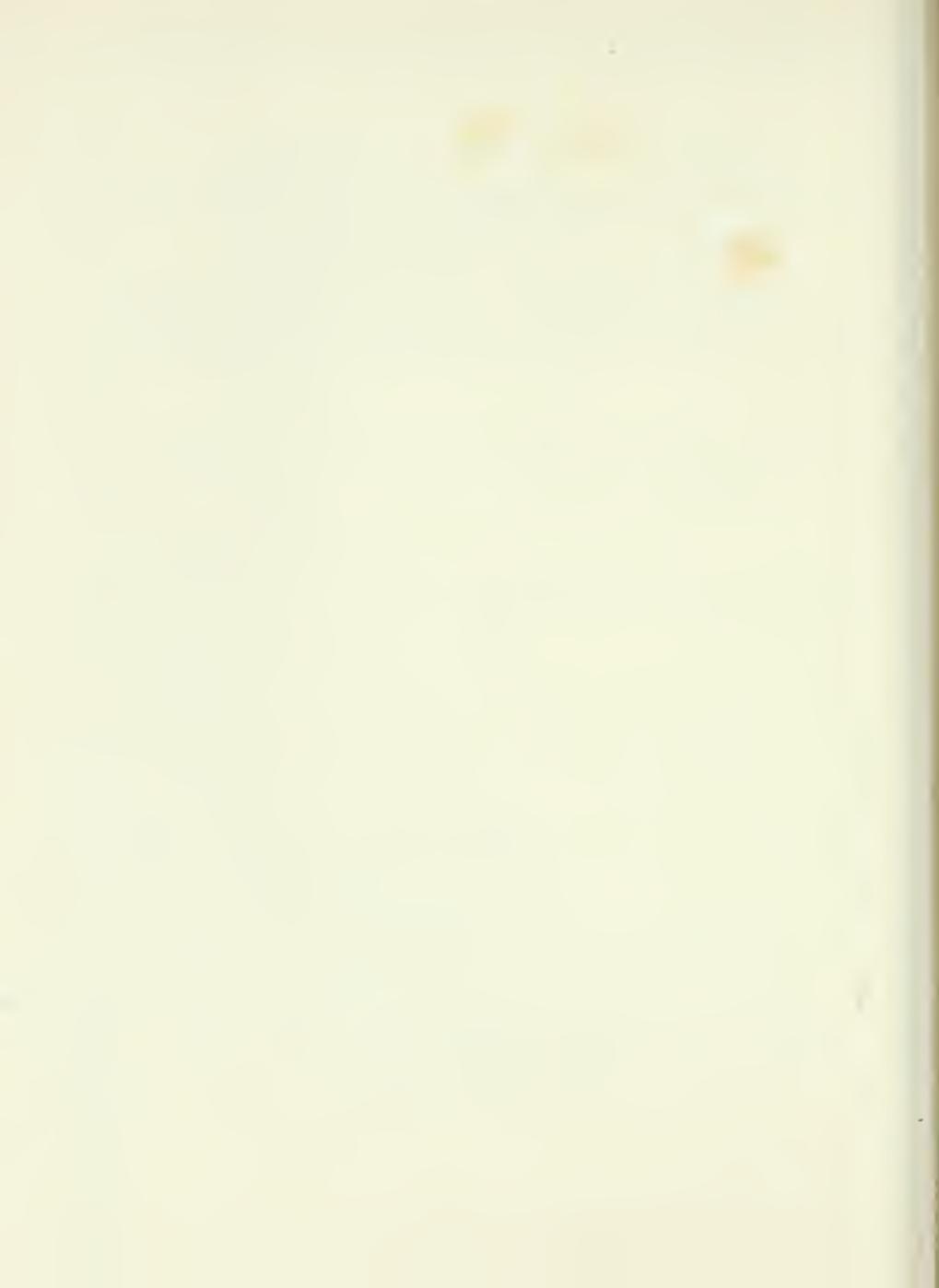
*Of all sweet new green things and new desires,
Thou, Spring, returnest; but, alas! with thee
No more return to me
The calm and happy days these eyes were used to see.
Thou, thou returnest, thou,
But with thee returns now
Nought else but dread remembrance of the pleasure
I took in my lost treasure.
Thou still, thou still, art the same blithe, sweet thing
Thou ever wast, O Spring;
But I, in whose weak orbs these tears arise,
Am what I was no more, dear to another's eyes.*

GIOVANNI BATTISTA GUARINI,
(Translated by Leigh Hunt.)

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